Geographic Review Panel 4 – San Joaquin River

Proposal number: 2001-K201 **Short Proposal Title:** Genetic Population Structure of Central Valley Chinook

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region. This project would contribute to the CALFED goal of at-risk species recovery and conservation and protection and recovery of harvestable species. Similarly, this is consistent with one CVPIA objective to collect fish population data to better understand the relationship between hatchery and natural fish production, and could help better assist in evaluating the effects of restoration and recovery. This proposal addresses fish issues that are clearly relevant to helping to ensure success of meeting ERP and CVPIA goals. These goals can best be met if indeed one knows what they are really dealing with in terms of ESU's and may be critical, for example, if salmon were to be restored in the upper San Joaquin River (above the mouth of the Merced).

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. Proposed project is linked to previously funded genetic evaluation to develop a genetic baseline for San Joaquin Basin chinook salmon. This project will likely ultimately affect the management and evaluation of success of chinook salmon on the San Joaquin River and its tributaries. It may also help develop baseline information to determine which genetic strain(s) would be the most suitable for restoration on the Upper San Joaquin River if that is ultimately determined to be possible. So it may ultimate provide information to be integrated into the San Joaquin River Restoration Implementation Plan.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. No likely major field sampling or coordination issues that should delay the project. However, extensive technical review comments need to be closely scrutinized and acted on if a portion of this project is to be funded. Of primary concern are: 1) no monitoring or sampling protocol for the microsatellite analysis which is critical, 2) and concerns about the ability to address questions of life history validation using otolith analysis technique.

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. This is a highly technical proposal and applicant qualifications are paramount to the success of the project. The reviewers note that the personnel responsible for the allozyme sampling have an excellent reputation and publication record, those responsible for the microsatellite analysis appear to have experience and a few publications, and not much known about those responsible for otolith analysis.

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). None needed.

6. Cost. The Panel defers to the independent technical reviewer experienced in allozyme analysis who thought some costs related to the allozyme portion of the study were inflated, and that some equipment purchases were unnecessary.

7. Cost sharing. NMFS and DFG will provide in-kind services.

8. Additional comments. Numerous technical and fiscal comments were raised in the very extensive scientific and technical reviews. One that definitely needs to be followed up on is that work from past-funded efforts does not result in a duplication of effort and that possibly a smaller pilot effort be considered as a first step to see if population and population sub-division characteristics can be reliably discerned.

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Medium

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking: The TARP ranked as very good with cautions. This Panel gives it a medium based on the fact that no new genetic information would be collected from the San Joaquin Basin tributaries and genetic evaluations are currently ongoing. Also, it appears that this approach may be most valuable in stream that support multiple races of chinook salmon.